

Historic and Cultural Resources for Community Development: Northern Ireland's Townscape Heritage Initiative Program

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Ballentoy Harbor On the northeastern coast

The Context



Source:

<http://www.ireland-map.co.uk/physical-map-of-northern-ireland.htm>

- Pop: nearly 1.7 million
- Part of the United Kingdom; six counties in the Province of Ulster
- Occupies 1/6 of the island; the remainder is the Republic of Ireland
- Devolved government (similar to Scotland and Wales) defined by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920
- Ethno-political conflict between Nationalists and Unionists for many years – “the Troubles”
- Belfast Agreement in 1998 has brought the end of majority of conflict

Changing times...

- About 44% of the population in Northern Ireland is Catholic; 54% Protestant
- Indications of a significant change – “religious independents”
- Young population – 55% under the age of 35

...coupled with rich resources



Source: <http://www.niphotos.com>

Mount Stewart

Historic home and gardens now in public trust and nominated as a World Heritage Site

- Myriad resources – cultural, historic, natural – abound
- Not developed as in Republic
- Potential is very high for building on these resources

Need for development

- *NI has the smallest economy in the UK*
- *Much traditional/heavy industry has declined*
- *Service economy, primarily public sector*
- *Tourism playing a larger role now, post 1998*



19 Bridge Street, Lisburn
Before and after, formerly derelict town centre property, now a mixed use retail and residential development.

Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

- The UK's Heritage Lottery Fund grant program for regeneration of historic villages, towns and cities.



Underlying premise:
sustainable conservation
to raise the standard of
repair in the absence of
market response,
serving as catalyst for
further development

It is a national program, yet...

- Requires local collaborative efforts (project manager and team) to apply for grants and implement
- Public participation is essential (and required)
- Must be representative of a cross section of the community

Started 1998

- Worked with 18 communities
- Provides funds and support services
- Aimed at helping people enjoy a better quality of life in their communities



The Quality of Life Emphasis...



Village of Caledon, Courthouse

Before and After, built in 1822. Mixed use with retail, conference and community facilities and visitor info point. Serves as a point of pride for the community as it was formerly derelict.

- QOL is directly tied to a community's image of itself....is this related to recognition and respect for its heritage?

(N. Tyler)

Building on Tradition



- Using HISTORIC PRESERVATION techniques and/or CULTURAL ASSETS as the basis for the redevelopment strategy...

The Manor House, Moneymore 18th century (Before & After)

The uses in this key listed building in the town centre have been diversified. The building now houses a tourist information point, and hostel, providing a facility for visitors to orientate themselves and stay when exploring the town and the neighbouring Sperrin Mountains.

What is valued about the THI?

- *Bringing buildings back into full use and establishing new living accommodations in the city centre*
- *The retention of core heritage fabric and its enhancement – the sense of community ownership*
- *Heritage resources are brought to the forefront and has positive social, cultural, and economic impacts*
- *Community interest and care for their built heritage has increased, and culturally significant buildings have been saved from neglect or demolition*

Ranking goals of the THI program in communities:

- 1. conserve and enhance heritage resources
- 2. economic regeneration using heritage as the basis
- 3. encourage more people to be involved in their heritage
- 4. increase access to heritage



The Woodbank Manor House,
Newtownabbey, built 1810 and once
occupied by Jonathan Swift

Enhancing community quality

- Here are the top ways social and cultural aspects have been impacted by the THI
 - 1. A positive change in the level of involvement in heritage activities by people of all ages and an increase in civic pride
 - 2. Greater access to heritage resources by citizens, including new complementary facilities
 - 3. A lessening of crime or vandalism of historic properties

THI - Summary of Projects

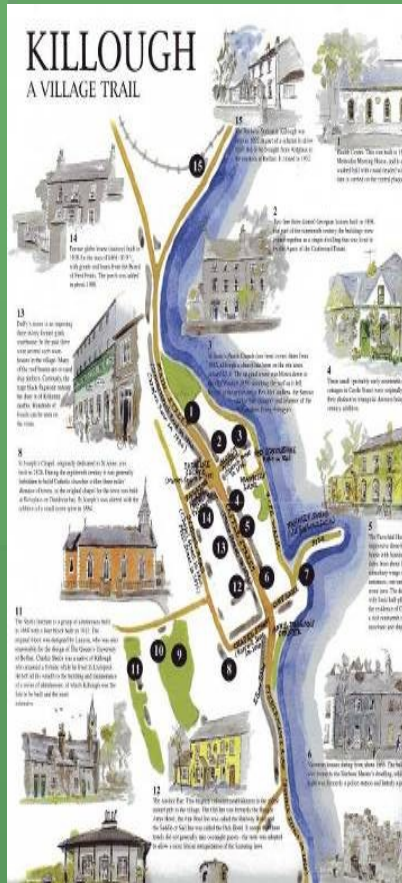
Completed THI Projects	5
Number of Properties involved	59
Floor Area Reclaimed/Improved for Use (sq m)	16,758
Number of Habitable Rooms	310
Number of New Jobs	72

Example: Killough

Killough's scheme first provided a community centre by reconfiguring a derelict property into useable and accessible space. They focused on making the beach area more accessible by including landscaping such as a ropewalk. Civic pride has increased, reflected in activities such as "Tea in the Square".



Palatine Square
Enhanced quality of central square, seafront and youth club in this former port and fishing village; providing new civic spaces and facilities for both villagers and



An attractive village trail allows people to learn about how the village has taken its present day form.

- Site of much prior conflict; tensions were high at onset of project – “haves vs have nots”
- Community center was first project – accessible space for all
- Beach accessibility

Collaboration is key

- Work with local community/economic development organizations (non-profit and public) and other organizations (civic, etc.) to identify ways to build on historic preservation and community development efforts
- Crosses “political” boundaries and age groups
- Why did the different/conflicting groups want to work together at all?

Development needs outweighed “political” concerns

Lessons Learned

- Conflicts regarding historic resources can be helped by increasing access/use for all
- Building community capability and skill helps achieve positive community development outcomes
- History and culture can be used to transform quality of life



Before



After

5-7 Irish Street, Downpatrick

The cheme included renovating historic properties for new uses as housing. *Care has been taken to repair the architectural detail of this prominent corner site, to ensure the retention and enhancement of historic character, resulting in higher civic/community pride.*